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㉖ **Production of aliphatic primary or secondary amines.**

㉗ Disclosed is a process for preparing an unsaturated aliphatic primary or secondary amine from the corresponding unsaturated aliphatic nitrile without hydrogenating an olefinic bond in the molecule. The process employs a catalyst which is a combination of copper and specific metal.

**EP 0 372 544 A2**

## PRODUCTION OF ALIPHATIC PRIMARY OR SECONDARY AMINES

The present invention relates to a process for preparing an aliphatic primary or secondary amine from an aliphatic nitrile.

An aliphatic primary or secondary amine, especially one containing an unsaturated group, is very useful for many applications or as intermediate. The amine is generally prepared by hydrogenating an unsaturated aliphatic nitrile in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation

For producing the aliphatic secondary amine, the use of a copper-chromium catalyst is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. However, since the copper-chromium catalyst is poor in catalyst activity, it takes a long time to terminate the reaction. Japanese Kokai Publication (unexamined) 55-9018 proposes a nickel containing catalyst which, however, hydrogenates a unsaturated group in the molecule as well as a nitrile group. Accordingly, it is difficult to selectively produce the unsaturated secondary amine. In order to resolve the above problems, Japanese Kokai Publication (unexamined) 62-175445 discloses that the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of a nickel containing catalyst and a carboxylic amide. In this reaction, the carboxylic amide is brought into the reaction product and is quite difficult to remove or separate from the product.

For producing the aliphatic primary amine, Japanese Patent Publication (examined) 38-21353 teaches that the hydrogenation of the unsaturated aliphatic nitrile is carried out in the presence of Raney nickel or Raney cobalt as well as an alkali (alkali metal hydroxide) or ammonia. This method also hydrogenates not only a nitrile group but also an unsaturated groups. It therefore is difficult to selectively produce the unsaturated primary amine.

It has been found that, when copper is combined with a specific metal and employed as catalyst for hydrogenation, an unsaturated aliphatic secondary or primary amine is selectively prepared from an unsaturated aliphatic nitrile, wherein the olefinic group remains unsaturated in the molecules. The process is applicable to the production of the aliphatic secondary or primary amine having an unsaturated group, and is also effective for producing the saturated aliphatic secondary or primary amine from the corresponding saturated nitriles

Accordingly, the first object of the present invention provides a process for preparing an aliphatic secondary amine comprising reacting a  $C_8-C_{24}$  aliphatic nitrile with hydrogen at a temperature of from 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation while removing produced ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (b) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel and zinc in a metal weight ratio (a/b) of from 99/1 to 10/90.

The second object of the present invention also provides a process for preparing an aliphatic secondary amine comprising reacting a  $C_8-C_{24}$  aliphatic nitrile with hydrogen at a temperature of from 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation while removing produced ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (e) the VIII group metal in a metal weight ratio (a/e) of from 1/0.0001 to 1/0.1

The third object of the present invention further provides a process for preparing an aliphatic primary amine comprising reacting a  $C_8-C_{24}$  aliphatic nitrile with hydrogen at a temperature of from 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation and either alkali metal hydroxide or ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (e) an VIII. group platinum metal and/or (f) a IV. period transition metal except for copper in a metal weight ratio (a/e) of from 1/0.0001 to 1/0.1 and (a/f) of from 99/1 to 10/90.

The catalyst for hydrogenation of the first object of the present invention comprises (a) copper and (b) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel and zinc. The metal weight ratio of a/b is within the range of from 99/1 to 10/90, preferably from 99/1 to 50/50. If the metal weight ratio is outside the above range, it may hydrogenate the olefinic group in the molecule and production efficiency becomes poor. The catalyst may contain (c) an alkali metal or an alkali earth metal in a metal weight ratio (a/c) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01, preferably from 1/0.5 to 1/0.01. Typical examples of the alkali metals are lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium and cesium. Typical examples of the alkali earth metals are magnesium, calcium, strontium and barium. If the amount of the component (c) is more than 1/1 in a metal weight ratio based on the amount of (a), catalyst activity becomes poor. The catalyst may further contain (d) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten. The metal weight ratio of a/d is preferably within the range of from 1/1 to 1/0.01. If the amount of the component d exceeds 1/1, catalyst activity is poor.

The catalyst for hydrogenation of the second object of the present invention comprises (a) copper and

(e) a VIII group metal. Typical examples of the VIII group metals are platinum, ruthenium and palladium. The metal weight ratio of a/e is preferably within the range of 1/0 0001 to 1/0.1. If the metal weight ratio is outside the above range it may hydrogenate the olefinic groups in the molecule, thus hydrogenation selectivity being poor. The catalyst may contain (f) a IV. period transition metal, except copper, in a metal weight ratio (a/f) of from 99/1 to 10/90, preferably from 99/1 to 50/50. The IV. period transition metal, except copper enhances the hydrogenation selectivity. Typical examples of the 4th period transition metals, except copper are chromium, manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel and zinc. The catalyst may further contain (c) an alkali metal or an alkali earth metal or (e) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten in the same metal weight ratio as that of the catalyst of the first object. These metals increase the catalyst activity.

The catalyst for hydrogenation of the third object of the present invention comprises (a) copper and (e) a VIII. group platinum metal and/or (f) a IV. period transition metal, except copper, in a metal weight ratio (a/e) of from 1/0 0001 to 1/0 1 and (a/f) of from 99/1 to 10/90. The components (e) and (f) are the same as described in the above first and second object. If the amounts of the components (e) and (f) is outside the above range, both the selectivity and activity of the catalyst are poor. The catalyst may contain (c) an alkali metal or an alkali earth metal or (e) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten in the same metal weight ratio as that of the catalyst of the first object. These metals increase catalyst activity.

The metal mentioned above may be contained in the catalyst of the present invention in any form, such as the metal itself, as a metal oxide, metal hydroxide, metal salt and metal ion. In other words, the metals contained in the catalyst of the present invention are required to come into contact with the aliphatic nitrile in the reaction system, irrespective of the form in which the metal is employed.

The catalyst of the present invention can be used in any form, such as in the form of the metal itself, as a metal-containing material (such as, metal oxide, metal hydroxide, metal salt and metal ion) which may be carried on a carrier. The metal contained in the catalyst may be a complex stabilized by chelation with an aliphatic carboxylic acid or a suitable ligand. The catalyst can be a combination of the above mentioned forms. It is preferred to use the metal carried on a suitable carrier, because of the stability of the catalyst metal and the resistance against a catalyst poison. Such carriers are alumina, silica, silica-alumina, diatomaceous earth, active carbon, zeolite and the like. The metal may be preferably present in the carrier in an amount of from 5 to 70 % by weight. A method for bringing the catalyst metal on the carrier is known in the art, for example an impregnating method wherein a carrier is poured in a solution containing a suitable metal salt for impregnating; a method wherein an alkali solution containing ammonia, sodium hydroxide, sodium carbonate and the like is added to a solution containing a carrier and a catalyst metal salt to precipitate the metal salt on the carrier; a method wherein an alkali solution and a metal salt solution are simultaneously added to a carrier slurry to precipitate the metal salt on the carrier; or an ion-exchange method wherein a catalyst metal is ion-exchanged with sodium or potassium in zeolite.

The reaction of the present invention can be carried out by contacting the catalyst for hydrogenation with the aliphatic nitrile. The contact can be done in an art-known method. For example, since many aliphatic nitriles are liquid in ambient temperature, the above catalyst may be simply mixed with the aliphatic nitrile. After finishing the reaction, the catalyst can be separated from the reaction product.

The aliphatic nitrile employed in the present invention is a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic nitrile having 8 to 24 carbon atoms, such as capronitrile, laurionitrile, coconut oil fatty acid nitrile, beef fatty acid nitrile, stearonitrile, cleonitrile, linolonitrile, linoleonitrile, eruconitrile, behenonitrile or a mixture thereof. A nitrile having a branch chain which is prepared from a synthetic fatty acid having a branch chain can also be used.

The reaction can be carried out by charging the aliphatic nitrile and the catalyst for hydrogenation in a reaction vessel having a hydrogen introducing tube, a tube for sampling and a drain tube for the produced ammonia. The amount of the catalyst is not limited, but the preferred amount is generally from 1 to 5 % by weight based on the amount of the nitrile. The reaction vessel is filled with nitrogen and then substituted for hydrogen. The hydrogen pressure is controlled within 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure), preferably 5 to 30 atm during the reaction. The reaction vessel is then heated to a reaction temperature of from 150 to 250 °C, preferably from 180 to 230 °C. Ammonia produced during the reaction is continuously or intermittently drained off from the reaction vessel. After the completion of the reaction, the reaction product is distilled or filtered to separate from the catalyst.

For the third object, the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of the catalyst of the present invention and either an alkali metal hydroxide (e.g. sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide etc.) or ammonia. The amount of the alkali metal hydroxide is from 0.05 to 1.0 % by weight based on the aliphatic nitrile. Amounts less than 0.05 % by weight do not provide hydrogenation selectivity desired. Amounts more

than 1.0 % by weight lower catalyst activity.

According to the present invention, a long chain unsaturated aliphatic amine can be selectively prepared employing a specific catalyst in a very small amount from the corresponding unsaturated aliphatic nitrile in a short period of time. The catalyst employed in the present invention can keep their high catalyst activity after being used several ten times

### EXAMPLES

The present invention is illustrated by the following examples which, however are not construed as limiting the invention to their details.

#### Example 1 and Comparative Example 1

A one liter flask was charged with 500 g of ion-exchanged water, 20 g of synthetic zeolite (MS-5A available from Toso Company), 30 g of copper nitrate and 10 g of zinc nitrate, and heated to 90 °C with stirring. At that temperature, 167 g of a 10 % sodium carbonate aqueous solution was added dropwise and then aged for one hour. The precipitate was filtered and rinsed with water. It was then dried at 100 °C for 10 hours and baked at 700 °C for 2 hours to form a copper-zinc catalyst carried on synthetic zeolite.

Next, eruconitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated using the obtained catalyst as follow. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432.

A one liter reaction vessel having a hydrogen inlet, a sampling tube and an outlet for produced ammonia was charged with 400 g of eruconitrile and 4 g of the catalyst mentioned above and filled with nitrogen. Hydrogen was then introduced and pressured to 20 atm. The reaction vessel was heated to 180 °C, keeping the hydrogen pressure at 20 atm, and the reaction was started. Ammonia produced during the reaction was intermittently drained from the reaction vessel. After the completion of the reaction, the reaction product was filtered to separate from the catalyst. The reaction product was analyzed and the results are shown in Table 1

Table 1

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %*
			Unreacted eruconitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 1	Copper-zinc	12	1	90	9	98
Comparative Example 1	Copper-chromium	12	23	65	12	90

\* A percentage of an iodine number of the secondary amine divided by a theoretical iodine number of the secondary amine

Table 2

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted oleonitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 2	Copper-cobalt	20	1	88	11	95
Comparative Example 2	Copper-chromium	20	32	58	10	91

It is apparent that the catalyst of Example 1 has higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the olefinic bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 1

#### Example 2 and Comparative Example 2

A copper-cobalt catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1, with the exception that cobalt nitrate was employed instead of zinc nitrate. The catalyst has a copper/cobalt ratio of 5/1 and a metal support ratio of 20 % (wherein metal support ratio means the metal content (wt %) based on the catalyst).

Next, oleonitrile (96 % purity) was hydrogenated using the obtained catalyst as described in Example 1, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. The results are shown in Table 2

Oleonitrile	400 g
Copper-cobalt catalyst (Ex 2)	8 g
Copper-chromium catalyst (Comparative Ex 2)	8 g
Reaction temperature	200 °C
Hydrogen pressure	5 atm(gauge pressure)

It is apparent that the catalyst of Example 2 has higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with comparative Example 2

#### Example 3 and Comparative Example 3

A copper-nickel-potassium catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1, with the exception that nickel nitrate and potassium nitrate were employed instead of zinc nitrate. The catalyst has a copper/nickel/potassium ratio of 7/1/1 and a metal support ratio of 30 %.

Next, lindlonitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated using the obtained catalyst as described in Example 1 with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. The results are shown in Table 3.

Linolenitrile	400 g
Copper-nickel-potassium(Ex 3)	12 g
Copper-chromium catalyst (Comparative Example 3)	12 g
Reaction temperature	210 °C
Hydrogen pressure	25atm(gauge pressure)

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10 It is apparent that the catalyst of Example 3 has higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 3.

#### Example 4 and Comparative Example 4

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A copper-iron-barium catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1, with the exception that iron nitrate and barium nitrate were employed instead of zinc nitrate. The catalyst has a copper/iron/barium ratio of 8/1/0.5 and a metal support ratio of 20 %.

20 Next, linolenitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated using the obtained catalyst as described in Example 1, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. The results are shown in Table 4.

Linolenitrile	400 g
Copper-iron-barium (Ex 4)	12 g
Copper-chromium catalyst (Comparative Example 4)	12 g
Reaction temperature	210 °C
Hydrogen pressure	35atm(gauge pressure)

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35 It is apparent that the catalyst of Example 4 has higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 4

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Table 3

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted linolenitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 3	Copper-nickel-potassium	5	0	92	8	92
Comparative Example 3	Copper-chromium	5	15	73	12	88

Table 4

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted oleonitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 4	Copper-iron-barium	3	0	90	10	93
Comparative Example 4	Copper-chromium	3	8	79	13	85



Examples 5 and 6

5 A copper-manganese-aluminum catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1, with the exception that manganese nitrate and aluminum nitrate were employed instead of zinc nitrate. The catalyst has a copper/manganese/aluminum ratio of 8/1/0.5, a metal support ratio of 20 %.

10 Next, caprylonitrile (98 % purity) and branched nitrile (a branched nitrile having 18 carbon atoms derived from branched fatty acid available from Emery Company as Emasol 871) were hydrogenated using the catalyst obtained in Example 1, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. The results are shown in Table 5

15	Caprylonitrile (Ex 5)	400 g
	or	
	Branched nitrile (Ex 6)	400 g
	Copper-manganese-aluminum	12 g
	Reaction temperature	210 °C
20	Hydrogen pressure	25atm(gauge pressure)

It is apparent that the catalyst of Examples 5 and 6 has higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated olefinic bond in a molecule.

Example 7

30 This example shows the durability of the activity and selectivity of the catalyst obtained in Example 1 after repetitive cycles (5 times) of catalyst use and its successive recovery.

Oleonnitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated five times, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. The results are shown in Table 6

35	Catalyst/oleonnitrile (wt %)	2/100
	Reaction temperature	210 °C
	Hydrogen pressure	5 atm(gauge pressure)

40 It is apparent that the catalyst has a good activity and can selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the olefinic bond in a molecule, even after repeatedly being used five times.

Table 5

50		Reaction nitrile	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)		
				Unreacted nitrile	Secondary amine	Other component
	Example 5	Caprylonitrile	7	1	94	5
55	Example 6	Branched nitrile	10	0	93	7

Table 6

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted oleonitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 7	Copper-zinc	20	2	91	7	97

Examples 8 and 9 and Comparative Example 5

A copper-ruthenium catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1, with the exception that 30 mg of ruthenium chloride was employed instead of zinc nitrate. The catalyst has a copper/ruthenium ratio of 30/0.04 and a metal support ration of 28 %.

A copper-rhodium catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1 with exception that rhodium chloride was employed instead of zinc nitrate. the catalyst has a copper/rhodium ration of 31/0.04 and a metal support ratio of 28 %.

Next, eruconitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated using the obtained catalysts as described in Example 1, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432 The results are shown in Table 7.

Eruconitrile	400 g
Copper-ruthenium (Ex.8)	4 g
or	
Copper-rhodium (Ex 9)	4 g
Copper-chromium catalyst (Comparative Example 5)	4 g
Reaction temperature	180 °C
Hydrogen pressure	20atm(gauge pressure)

It is apparent that the catalysts of Example 8 and 9 have higher activity and can more selectively produce a long chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 5.

Table 7

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted eruconitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 8	Copper-ruthenium	9	0	90	10	90
Example 9	Copper-rhodium	9	0	89	11	89
Comparative Example 5	Copper-chromium	12	23	65	12	90

Examples 10 and 15 and Comparative Example 6

The copper / IV period transition metal (chromium, manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel or zinc)/rhodium catalysts of the present invention were prepared as broadly described in Example 1. The metal components, metal weight ratio and metal support ratio of the catalyst are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Example No	Catalyst	Metal weigh ratio	Metal support ratio (%)
10	Cu-Cr-Rh	Cu/Cr/Rh = 2/1/0.01	20
11	Cu-Mn-Rh	Cu/Mn/Rh = 4/1/0.03	20
12	Cu-Fe-Rh	Cu/Fe/Rh = 7/1/0.03	20
13	Cu-Co-Rh	Cu/Co/Rh = 7/1/0.03	20
14	Cu-Ni-Rh	Cu/Ni/Rh = 8/1/0.01	20
15	Cu-Zn-Rh	Cu/Zn/Rh = 4/1/0.05	20

Next, oleonitrile (96 % purity) was hydrogenated as broadly described in Example 1, using the obtained catalysts, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the similar reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. The results are shown in Table 9.

Oleonitrile 400 g

The catalysts 8 g  
(Examples 10 to 15)

Copper-chromium catalyst 8 g

(Comparative Example 6)

Reaction temperature 200 °C

Hydrogen pressure 20atm(gauge pressure)

Table 9

	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
		Unreacted oleonitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 10	7	1	94	5	92
Example 11	7	1	92	7	91
Example 12	7	0	95	5	92
Example 13	6	1	93	6	95
Example 14	6	0	95	5	90
Example 15	7	0	96	4	93
Comparative Example 6	10	3	85	12	90

It is apparent that the catalysts of Examples 10 to 15 have higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 6

#### Examples 16 and 19 and Comparative Example 7

The copper-cobalt-platinum- alkali metal or alkali earth metal catalysts of the present invention were prepared as broadly described in Example 1. The metal components, metal weight ratio and metal support ratio of the catalyst are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Example No.	Catalyst	Metal weigh ratio	Metal support ratio (%)
16	Cu-Co-Pt-K	Cu/Co/Pt/K = 7/1/0.01/0.5	30
17	Cu-Co-Pt-Cs	Cu/Co/Pt/Cs = 7/1/0.01/0.8	30
18	Cu-Co-Pt-Ca	Cu/Co/Pt/Ca = 8/1/0.02/0.5	30
19	Cu-Co-Pt-Ba	Cu/Co/Pt/Ba = 8/1/0.02/0.5	30

Next, linolonitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated as broadly described in Example 1, using the obtained catalysts, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. For comparison, the same reaction was conducted using the copper-chromium catalyst which is proposed in UK Patent 773,432. The results are shown in

Table 11.

Linolonitrile	400 g
The catalysts (Examples 16 to 19)	12 g
Copper-chromium catalyst (Comparative Example 7)	12 g
Reaction temperature	210 °C
Hydrogen pressure	10atm(gauge pressure)

Table 11

	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
		Unreacted linolnitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 16	9	0	98	2	93
Example 17	9	1	96	3	92
Example 18	9	1	97	2	91
Example 19	9	0	96	4	94
Comparative Example 7	9	8	84	8	90

It is apparent that the catalysts of Examples 16 to 19 have higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, in comparison with Comparative Example 7.

#### Examples 20 and 21

A copper-zinc-paradium-aluminum catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 1. The catalyst has a Cu/Zn/Pd/Al ratio of 8/2/0.2/0.5 and a metal support ratio of 50 %.

Next, caprylonitrile (98 % purity) and branched nitrile (a branched nitrile having 18 carbon atoms derived from branched fatty acid available from Emery Company as Emasol® 871) were hydrogenated using the obtained catalyst as described in Example 1, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. The results are shown in Table 12

Caprylonitrile (Ex.20)	400 g
or	
Branched nitrile (Ex.21)	400 g
The catalyst	12 g
Reaction temperature	210 °C
Hydrogen pressure	20atm(gauge pressure)

It is appear that the catalysts of Examples 20 and 21 have higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule.

#### Example 22

This example shows the durability of catalyst and selectivity of hydrogenation of the catalyst obtained in the following manners after 5 times cycle repetitions of catalyst use and its successive recovery.

A copper-zinc-ruthenium catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Example 3 with the exception that Zn nitrate and ruthenium chloride were employed. The catalyst has a copper/zinc/ruthenium ratio of 8/2/0.02 and a metal support ratio of 20 %.

Oleonnitrile (90 % purity) was hydrogenated five times, with the exception that amounts and reaction conditions are as follows. The results are shown in Table 13

Catalyst/oleonitrile (wt %)	2/100
Reaction temperature	200 °C
Hydrogen pressure	20atm(gauge pressure)

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It is apparent that the catalyst has good activity and can selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule, even after repeatedly using the catalyst five times.

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Table 12

	Reactant nitrile	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)		
			Unreacted nitrile	Secondary amine	Other component
Example 20	Caprylonitrile	5	0	94	6
Example 21	Branched nitrile	7	0	92	8

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Table 13

	Catalyst component	Reaction time (hour)	Reaction product component (wt %)			Olefinic bond retention %
			Unreacted oleonitrile	Secondary amine	Other component	
Example 22	Cu-Zn-Ru	6	0	95	5	95

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#### Production Example 1

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A one liter flask was charged with 50 g of ion-exchanged water, 20 g of synthetic zeolite (MS-5A), 50 g of copper nitrate, 10 g of zinc nitrate and 50 mg of ruthenium chloride, and heated to 80 °C with stirring. At that temperature, 255 g of a 10 % sodium carbonate aqueous solution was added dropwise and then aged one hour. The precipitate was filtered and rinsed with water. It was then dried at 100 °C for 10 hours and baked at 500 °C for 2 hours to form a copper-zinc-ruthenium catalyst carried on synthetic zeolite.

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#### Production Examples 2 to 5

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Copper-rhodium- IV. period metal (manganese, iron, cobalt or nickel)-lithium catalysts were prepared as broadly described in Production Example 1. All catalysts had a metal weight ratio (Cu/Rh/ IV. period metal/Li) of 8/0.5/1/0.5

#### Production Example 6

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A copper-zinc catalyst was prepared as broadly described in Production Example 1, with the exception that rhodium chloride was not employed. The catalyst had a metal weight ratio (Cu/Zn) of 9/1.

Examples 23 to 28

A one liter reaction vessel having a hydrogen inlet, a sampling tube and an outlet for produced ammonia was charged with 300 g of oleonitrile or stearonitrile, sodium hydroxide (0.2 % by weight) and the catalyst mentioned above and filled with nitrogen. Hydrogen was then introduced and pressured to a pressure as shown in Table 14. The reaction vessel was heated to a temperature as shown in Table 14, keeping the hydrogen pressure, and the reaction was started. After the completion of the reaction, the reaction product was filtered to separate from the catalyst. The reaction product was analyzed and the results are shown in Table 14.

Comparative Example 8 and 9

The same experiments were conducted as broadly described in Examples 23 to 28, with the conditions as shown in Table 14. The analysis and double bond retention are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

	Example No.						Comparative Example No.	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	8	9
	Production Example No.						Raney-Ni	Raney-Ni
Catalyst								
Nitrile	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Percentage of the catalyst (wt%)	Oleonnitrile	Stearonnitrile	Stearonnitrile	Stearonnitrile	Stearonnitrile	Oleonnitrile	Oleonnitrile	Oleonnitrile
Hydrogen pressure (gauge press.)	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Reaction temperature (°C)	20	10	10	10	10	20	20	20
Reaction time (h)	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	130
Reaction product component (wt%)	6	7	7	7	6	8	2	4
Unreacted Oleonnitrile	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Primary amine	86	94	92	95	94	94	92	93
Other component	4	4	7	5	6	6	8	7
Olefinic bond retention %	98					92	0	80



It is apparent that the catalysts of Examples 23 to 28 have higher activity and can more selectively produce a long-chain unsaturated aliphatic secondary amine without hydrogenating the unsaturated double bond in a molecule. in comparison with Comparative Examples 8 and 9.

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# Claims

- 1 A process for preparing an aliphatic secondary amine comprising reacting a C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>24</sub> aliphatic nitrile  
10 with hydrogen at a temperature of 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation while removing produced ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (b) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel and zinc in a metal weight ratio (a/b) of from 99/1 to 10/90.
- 2 The process according to Claim 1 wherein said catalyst further contains (c) an alkali or alkali earth  
15 metal in a metal weight ratio (a/c) of from 1/1 to 100/1.
- 3 The process according to Claim 1 wherein said catalyst further contains (d) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten in a metal weight ratio (a/d) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01.
- 4 A process for preparing an aliphatic secondary amine comprising reacting a C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>24</sub> aliphatic nitrile  
20 with hydrogen at a temperature of 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation as removing produced ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (e) an VIII. group metal in a metal weight ratio (a/e) of from 1/0.0001 to 1/0.1.
- 5 The process according to Claim 4 wherein said catalyst further contains (f) a IV. period transition metal except copper in a metal weight ratio (a/f) of from 99/1 to 10/90.
- 25 6 The process according to Claim 5 wherein said catalyst further contains (c) an alkali or alkali earth metal in a metal weight ratio (a/c) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01.
7. The process according to Claim 5 wherein said catalyst further contains (d) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten in a metal weight ratio (a/d) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01.
- 30 8. A process for preparing an aliphatic primary amine comprising reacting a C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>24</sub> aliphatic nitrile with hydrogen at a temperature of 150 to 250 °C and a hydrogen pressure of 1 to 50 atm (gauge pressure) in the presence of a catalyst for hydrogenation and either alkali metal hydroxide or ammonia, wherein the catalyst contains (a) copper and (e) an VIII. group platinum metal and/or (f) a IV. period transition metal except copper in a metal weight ratio (a/e) of from 1/0.0001 to 1/0.1 and (a/f) of from 99/1 to 10/90.
- 35 9. The process according to Claim 8 wherein said catalyst further contains (c) and alkali or alkali earth metal in a metal weight ratio (a/c) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01.
- 10 The process according to Claim 8 wherein said catalyst further contains (d) at least one metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, molybdenum and tungsten in a metal weight ratio (a/d) of from 1/1 to 1/0.01

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(19)



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(54) Production of aliphatic primary or secondary amines.

(57) Disclosed is a process for preparing an unsaturated aliphatic primary or secondary amine from the corresponding unsaturated aliphatic nitrile without hydrogenating an olefinic bond in the molecule. The process employs a catalyst which is a combination of copper and specific metal

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## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of search	Examiner
The Hague		23 January 91	SANCHEZ Y GARCIA J.M
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of search	Examiner
The Hague		23 January 91	SANCHEZ Y GARCIA J M
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